

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 246 473

CS 208 511

AUTHOR Hagge, John
TITLE Strategies for Verbal Interaction in Business Writing.
PUB DATE Mar 84
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (35th, New York City, NY, March 25-31, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Applied Linguistics; *Business Communication; Higher Education; *Interaction; *Interpersonal Relationship; *Speech Communication; *Technical Writing; *Verbal Communication; Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Speaking Writing Relationship

ABSTRACT

Business writers often use--or may be taught to use--strategies for verbal interaction analogous to those they use in conversation. Unfortunately, much current composition theory discounts analogies between verbal interaction in speaking and writing and therefore disallows applying the results of linguistic investigations of spoken language use to writing. However, the logic of business writing resembles that of ordinary conversation because in both cases discourse participants have available a shared situational context from which to draw meaning-producing inferences. Since business writers and readers interact with one another, they must acknowledge the requirements of "face" in these interactions through linguistic politeness forms. Because students already know how to use a wide range of politeness markers that signify the requisite level of courtesy for any given situation, they need only be shown how they can make that pragmatic competence explicit so that they can apply it to their business writing tasks. (Appended are examples of verbal politeness strategies, some comments on writer-reader interaction in current composition theory, and descriptions of some types of speech acts.) (HOD)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

ED246473

Strategies for Verbal Interaction In Business Writing

Annual Meeting
Conference on College Composition and Communication
New York City
March 29, 1984

John Hagge
Division of Business and Technical Writing
Department of English
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
208 English Building
608 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John Hagge

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

I'd like to begin with two anecdotes based on real-world business writing situations. I've changed only names and insignificant details. Clare Kildare works part-time in a large corporation. One day, a co-worker reads one of her memos. He crumples it into a ball without speaking, pitches it onto the floor, and stomps into his office. Clare later finds it posted on a bulletin board, bearing the legend "Don't let this happen to you!"

Puzzled and hurt, she shows the memo to her boss, Patricia MacPhee, who glances at it, shakes her head, and composes a second version. "Here," she

CS 208 5-11

says sympathetically but a trifle tartly to Clare, "This is what you should have written in the first place."

You'll find both versions of the memo in my handout. Neither version exemplifies deathless prose; composition teachers might pick nits in each text. Clare omits one word and misuses another. The last half of the first sentence should read (most likely) "into the D & E Fire Control Area designated as R-28 on the company map." She also overuses the passive voice: "pieces . . . are scheduled to be moved"; "block to be delivered"; and "cooperation is appreciated." Clare's surface errors alone, though, do not account for her colleague's angry reaction.

Clare has produced a memorandum concise to the point of discourtesy. She thinks only of doing her job--getting her readers to move posthaste. Instead of trying to insure cooperation among all the persons affected by her message, she gives her readers no choice but to move. And the sooner the better: "The laser gyro optics Lab is moving" whether the readers of the memo like it or not. To put the point more formally, she does not employ the politeness conventions she undoubtedly would have used had she transmitted her message orally instead of in writing. She does not apply appropriate strategies for verbal interaction learned through years of conversational practice to a situation that requires written communication.

Patricia writes effectively--and courteously. Although Clare's original memo omits all personal names, Patricia's is full of phrases that refer to the people concerned in the move, just as her speech would have been had she delivered her message orally. She uses address forms, a politeness strategy Brown and Levinson mention in their investigation of universal spoken linguistic politeness forms (in a volume significantly subtitled "Strategies in Social Interaction" [1978:112-115]). Her memorandum has been composed by a human being, an "I." Patricia treats her colleagues as equals, not pawns

to be pushed from place to place: "[We] would like to work with you in scheduling this exchange of space" This last phrase employs Brown and Levinson's Strategy 4, "Use in-group language or dialect" (1978:57 and 112 ff). "We appreciate your cooperation." She says explicitly and implicitly that she wants to work with people, "exchange," reciprocate with them--cooperate, using Brown and Levinson's Strategy 7, "assert common ground," (1978:57 and 122ff).

Patricia's memo accomplishes its dual purpose--(1) to get her readers to move (2) without offending them in the process--by employing linguistic politeness strategies analogous to those used in speech. These strategies are based on reciprocal personal knowledge between author and audience. Clare, Patricia, and the readers of the memorandum all interact daily on their jobs, so they know one another's attitudes, beliefs, motives, and so on well. The composition of the memorandum depends on this reciprocal personal knowledge: referring phrases such as "Dr. J. Smythe," "station 28," "an ICS RIG lab," and "Ginny Langston" are transparent to those involved in the situation but remain opaque to outsiders.

Because her memorandum is directed to persons who share reciprocal personal knowledge, Patricia does not need to contextualize within the text itself, contrary to the claim in much current composition theory that all writing involves explicit self-contextualization (e.g., Hirsch 1977:29; Dillon 1981:28; Flower and Hayes 1980:39; Nystrand 1982:22). Were she to, say, add explanatory appositives after each referring phrase, her memorandum would read strangely indeed. It would contain an excess of information that either would befuddle readers or cause them to infer some sort of implicature based on an infringement of Grice's second Quantity maxim, "Do not give more information than is required" (Grice 1975:52).

The next example is a sales letter addressed to my wife and me. It also illustrates the general point I'm trying to make: that business writers often use--or easily may be taught to use--strategies for verbal interaction analogous to those they use in conversation. Its writer had talked to my wife on the phone several times and had chatted with me face-to-face for nearly an hour before composing it. We'd begun to acquire mutual knowledge of one another qua prospective transaction derived from the situational context we shared. But students and business professionals to whom I've given the letter quickly notice a disparity between its circumstances of composition and the impersonality of the letter itself, which should relate to and continue the dialogue between customer and sales representative.

The writer doesn't specify any details of our move, although by referring precisely, she would have assured us that she had our best interests at heart. She could have addressed us as "John and Linda" to reinforce our "first-name basis" relationship. More important, she does nothing to assuage our fears about moving expensive, easily damaged items, although those fears figured prominently in our previous conversations and although she knows she might make a sale by doing so.

To generalize, our moving consultant wants us to perform some action--namely, contract with her moving company. But she writes a letter that violates the maxims of verbal interaction. She fails to use what Brown and Levinson (1978:106ff.) call positive politeness strategies (use appropriate forms of address, assert speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants, seek agreement by repeating items in a previous conversation).

This last strategy--recapitulating items from previous interaction--also would serve to remind both writer and reader of what transpired previous to the writing of the letter and thus sets the stage for further interaction. Again, this orientation strategy occurs frequently in spoken verbal

interaction, as Labov has shown in his research on natural narratives (1972; see also Labov and Waletzky 1967).

The moving consultant also neglects to mitigate the force of her own requests with negative politeness linguistic markers. In short, she ignores the fact that her letter grows from and depends for its force and meaning on a definite situational context involving real persons acting in the real world.

Our moving consultant's letter failed because she ignored the source of much human behavior in a nexus of mutual expectations that derive from shared knowledge of a situational context. She knew, for instance, that we feared to move our personal computer, and she knew that we knew that she knew this. Furthermore, she also knew that we knew that prospective movers expected moving companies to move delicate items with care; and she knew that we knew that she knew that we knew this (see Lewis 1972 and Bach and Harnish 1979 on mutual knowledge). By not honoring the mutual expectations that grew from our shared situational context, her letter went awry. To put the point more simply, our "moving consultant" wrote an ineffective letter because she didn't apply strategies for verbal interaction learned through years of speaking to an analogous writing situation.

Unfortunately, many current composition theorists discount similarities between speaking and writing and prefer a literary-theoretical to a linguistic model. According to this model, real writers and real readers rarely share a situational context and never truly interact. Instead, implied authors and imaginary audiences are created within the writing itself. Specialized written discourse conventions enable writers to perform this contextualization. The rhetorical problems to which writers respond are not merely givens but elaborate mental representations they construct while

composing.

But this model derives from its proponents' examination of published texts--expository essays and the like--only. Because of the way in which publication works, their authors cannot accurately know every reader's needs, beliefs, and understanding of the topic. To hedge their bets, they must contextualize, whereas speakers in everyday conversation don't.

Many other types of writing, however, aren't published--disseminated to broad, heterogeneous audiences temporally and spatially removed from their authors. Instead, they are sent to a well-defined set of readers with whom the writer shares a pre-established situational context. Using the Greek for "to send," I call these compositions epistolary texts. Proponents of the literary-theoretical composition model argue in circles because they tacitly assume that all writing operates as does published writing, then base their model of writing on the way in which author-audience relationships appear to work published texts only.

Business writing depends on and facilitates something prior to itself--a business transaction, "the exchange of goods, money, or services for mutual benefit" (McNaughton, Hartley, and Schwartz 1970:2). The purpose of a business is to stay in business; a business transaction depends on decisions based on participants' mutual knowledge of the conditions of the transaction (Robinson, Morton, and Calderwood 1980:2); this "process of converting knowledge to action is the engine that drives the [business] organization" (Zand 1981:19)--and business writing.

Business writing stems from human actions and functions to facilitate other actions. But the expository essay--the exemplar of the published types of writing traditionally taught in composition courses, "does not seek to engage the reader in a course of action . . . but rather in a process of reflection," as George Dillon, for instance, puts it (1981:23).

For that reason, the speech acts that make up a business writing text may significantly from those published, expository texts comprise. The latter mainly contain constatives, which convey "the expression of a belief, together with the expression of an intention that the hearer form (or continue to hold) a like belief" (Bach and Harnish 1979:42). But directives, which "express the speaker's attitude toward some prospective action by the hearer and his intention that his utterance, or the attitude it expresses, be taken as a reason for the hearer's action," and commissives, which "express the speaker's intention and belief that his utterance obligates him to do something" (1979:41), characterize business writing.

Since business writers and readers interact with one another, they must acknowledge the requirements of "face" in these interactions through linguistic politeness forms (Brown and Levinson 1978). And because business writing develops from a particular situational context in which both writer and reader participate, it follows that business writers and readers share mutual knowledge about that situational context and about one another. More important, this knowledge often becomes more precise over time. Business transactions initiate responses that may entail more business writing, which may lead to additional responses, and so on; and more contextual knowledge accrues with each exchange. Of course, business writers and readers may interact in ways other than through texts, and the contextual information built up thereby may be applied to their business writing.

The scant empirical research on practical writing supports my view that business writers compose using real-world knowledge of their readers. Odell and Goswami (1982) report that non-academic writers reasoned about stylistic choices based on their personal knowledge of readers (209) and that "many choices' apparent in workers' writing (e.g., choices about the form of a

request, the inclusion of elaboration) are also important in speaking" (221).

In short, much current composition theory discounts analogies between verbal interaction in speaking and writing and therefore disallows applying the results of linguistic investigations of spoken language-use to writing. However, the logic of business writing resembles that of ordinary conversation because in both cases discourse participants have available a shared situational context from which to draw meaning-producing inferences. Therefore we might apply many insights from sociolinguistics and linguistic pragmatics to explain strategies for verbal interaction in business writing and to produce better business writing theory and pedagogy.

This notion was corroborated during some recent consulting work I did. My mission was to convince 15 no-nonsense engineering managers that the terse memos and letters they wrote were not improving the image of their organization. Most of them didn't see why I wanted them to write anything but just the facts until I demonstrated that in everyday conversation, all speakers of English use multifarious linguistic politeness forms. Again, many managers at first resisted my suggestion that they provide background information at the beginning of a memo and synopsize its contents immediately. I convinced them that not only were these practices courtesies to readers that would insure more effective communication, but also pointed out that they did just those things all the time in speech, whether they were transacting business or engaging in informal conversation.

My business writing students also profit from exploring spoken language phenomena and applying their discoveries to their compositions. Consider again the notion of courtesy. Most business communication textbooks, even those supposedly based on current composition research, treat courtesy in the abstract. Students are told to put the concerns, problems, desires, and motivations of their readers first. Easier said than done. Especially since

their texts don't inform students how they are to convey the so-called "you-attitude" in a specific situation with particular linguistic tokens.

Students find it hard to "learn" how to put the "you-attitude" into words. But they don't have to. They already know how to use a wide range of politeness markers that signify the requisite level of courtesy for any given situation because through many years of social interaction they've acquired pragmatic as well as phonological and grammatical competence in their native language. They need only be shown how they can make that pragmatic competence explicit so that they can apply it to their business writing tasks.

In short, business writing, unlike essay writing, is in most cases tied to a definite situational context and produced for a definite audience. Verbal interaction in business writing often resembles that in speech. Just as do speakers of a language (Green and Morgan 1981:178-180), business writers use knowledge about language, knowledge about the use of language, and knowledge about an audience in order to communicate. For that reason, business writing involves a strong pragmatic component.

As Georgia Green and Jerry Morgan suggest in their contribution to a recent collection of articles entitled Radical Pragmatics, a viable theory of discourse can only rest "on a simple but pervasive human ability: the ability to interpret the actions of other people by forming complex hypotheses about goals, plans, and intentions that underlie acts" (1981:174). In business writing, as in conversation, these hypotheses are not fictions or mere mental representations but the results of reasoning from real events and the behavior of real people interacting in the real world. Business writing is thus a quintessentially human activity the teaching of which deserves a not inconsequential place in the humanities curriculum.

REFERENCES

- Bach, Kent and Robert M. Harnish. 1979. *Linguistic communication and speech acts*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brown, Penelope and Stephen Levinson. 1978. Universals in language use: politeness phenomena. *Questions and politeness: strategies in social interaction*. Ed. by Esther N. Goody, 56-289. Cambridge, Engl.: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Dillon, George L. 1981. *Constructing texts: elements of a theory of composition and style*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press.
- Flower, Linda and John R. Hayes. 1980b. The dynamics of composing: making plans and juggling constraints. *Cognitive processes in writing*. Ed. by Lee W. Gregg and Erwin R. Steinberg, 31-50. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Green, Georgia M. and Jerry L. Morgan. 1981. Pragmatics, grammar, and discourse. *Radical pragmatics*. Ed. by Peter Cole, 167-181. New York: Academic Press.
- Grice, H. P. 1975. Logic and conversation. *Syntax and semantics III: speech acts*. Ed. by Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan, 41-58. New York: Academic Press.
- Hirsch, Jr., E. D. 1977. *The philosophy of composition*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Labov, William. 1972. The transformation of experience in narrative syntax. *Language in the inner city: studies in the black English vernacular*, 354-396. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.
- Labov, William and Joshua Waletzky. 1967. Narrative analysis: oral versions of personal experience. *Essays on the verbal and visual arts*. Ed. by J. Helm [MacNeish], 12-44. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press.
- Lewis, David K. 1969. *Convention: a philosophical study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- McNaughton, Wayne L., J. McClelland Hartley, and Frederick L. Schwartz. 1970. *Introduction to business enterprise*. 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Nystrand, Martin. 1982. Rhetoric's "audience" and linguistics' "speech community": implications for understanding writing, reading, and text. *What writers know: the language, process, and structure of written discourse*. Ed. by Martin Nystrand, 1-28. New York: Academic Press.
- Odell, Lee and Dixie Goswami. 1982. Writing in a non-academic setting. *Research in the Teaching of English* 16:201-223.

Robinson, Marshall A., Herbert C. Morton, and James D. Calderwood. 1980. An introduction to economic reasoning. 5th rev. ed. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Zand, Dale E. 1981. Information, organization, and power: effective management in the knowledge society. New York: McGraw-Hill.

EXAMPLES

Example 1

Original Version (Pildare's)

The laser gyro optics Lab is moving into the D&E Fire Control destined as R-38 on the company map.

Several large pieces of equipment are scheduled to be moved into the Laser lab, in particular a 6 ft x 4 ft x 5 in granite block to be delivered by April 21. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Revised Version (MacPhee's)

I understand that Dr. J. Smythe and Professor Natasha Bulov have agreed that a room in the optics lab facility, located between stations R and Q, above station 28, is to be made available for an ICS RLG lab.

Among other pieces of equipment we wish to place in this room is a 6 ft by 4 ft by 5 inch granite slab, which is scheduled to be delivered April 21, 1980. Those of us who will be using the lab--Melinda Perkins, Tom Aherst, Ginny Langston--and I would like to work with you in scheduling this exchange of space. We appreciate your cooperation.

Example 2

Background Information

The "moving consultant" who wrote this letter has talked several times on the phone with my wife and me, its addressees. She's also met with me face-to-face at our house for an hour to estimate the cost of the move. As a result of these verbal interactions, the moving consultant shares much relevant contextual information with my wife and me about our move. She knows that:

1. We intend to move by July 1 to Champaign, Illinois.
2. We're worried about having to move a piano and a personal computer with printer. "Moving consultants" from other firms warned us that the Fourth of July weekend was a bad time to move. Other firms couldn't guarantee arrival in Champaign by the 1 July; neither can our "moving consultant." The "moving consultant" expressed several times in our conversations her apprehension that we'd pick another company instead of hers.
3. We want to save as much money as we can, but we're anxious about moving our household furnishings intact. We intend to pack our own belongings.

These are the salient points. One might easily argue that our moving consultant had the opportunity in her face-to-face meeting with me to gain much more knowledge about me that would have helped her to compose effective. But none of this information appears in her letter. Instead, she presumes we've agreed to move with her firm when we haven't.

Example 2, con't.

April 29, 1983

Mr. & Mrs. John Hagge
3120 - 17th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Hagge:

In order to maintain control, quality of service and closely monitor your move from start to finish, we ask that you deal with us with regard to the following:

1. Premove arrangements
2. Preliminary packing and loading dates
3. Any questions pertaining to your move with which we may be of assistance.
4. Any claims, should damage occur in the course of the move, with a description of the damaged goods.

The success of any relocation is largely dependent upon information supplied by you, the shipper, with regard to your needs and how we can meet those needs. We therefore invite your questions and inquiries. You may call myself or George Roth at (612) 484-0211 or 1-800-328-9597.

I hope you've had the time to read our "Moving Kit" as it contains information and advice which will make your planning and preparation easier.

We look forward to providing our service and wish you much happiness and good fortune at your new location.

Sincerely,

KG/pk
Moving Consultant

VERBAL POLITENESS STRATEGIES

Some remarks from Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, "Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena," in Questions and politeness: strategies in social interaction, ed. Esther N. Goody, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978.

[A]cross cultures, the nature of the transaction being conducted in a verbal interchange is often evident as much in the manner in which it is done as in any overt performative acts. In other words, one recognizes what people are doing in verbal exchanges (e.g. requesting, offering, criticizing, complaining, suggesting) not so much by what they overtly claim to be doing as in the fine linguistic detail of their utterances. . . . For instance, it is rarely that people actually say things like 'I hereby request . . .'; and yet as soon as one hears things like 'Look, I'm terribly sorry to bother you, would it be awfully inconvenient if . . .' one knows perfectly well what sort of interactional fix one is in. (61-62)

Definition of face. . . . face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face. (66)

Politeness. Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of H[earer], the positive self-image that he claims for himself. . . . Negative politeness, on the other hand, is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying (redressing) H's negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. (75)

Some Particular Strategies

Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers. (112ff) Use of jargon or slang. Related to the use of an in-group language or dialect is the use of in-group terminology. (116)

Strategy 5: Seek agreement. (117ff) Repetition. Agreement may also be stressed by repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said, in a conversation.

Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground. (122ff) Presuppose familiarity in the S[peaker]-H[earer] relationship. (128) Presuppose H's knowledge. The use of any term presupposes (in some senses) that the referents are known to the addressee. Thus the use of in-group codes--language, dialect, jargon, local terminology--assumes that H understand and shares the associations of that code. This assumption may be exploited as a positive-politeness device: . . . (129)

Strategy 10: Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants. One way of indicating that S and H are cooperators, and thus potentially to put pressure on H to cooperate with S, is to assert or imply knowledge of H's wants and willingness to fit one's own wants in with them. (130)

SOME COMMENTS ON WRITER-READER INTERACTION IN CURRENT COMPOSITION THEORY

"Writing calls for difficult, and often quite mysterious, skills. Except for a small corps of highly trained writers, most persons could get into written form few if any of the complicated and nuanced meanings they regularly convey orally. One reason is evident: the spoken word is part of present actuality and has its meaning established by the total situation in which it comes into being. Context for the spoken word is simply present, centered in the person speaking and the one or ones to whom he addresses himself and to whom he is related existentially in terms of the circumambient actuality. But the meaning caught in writing comes provided with no such present circumambient actuality, at least normally." (Ong 1975:10)

"... the person to whom the writer addresses himself normally is not present at all. Moreover, with certain special exceptions... he must not be present. I am writing a book which will be read by thousands, or, I modestly hope, by tens of thousands. So, please, get out of the room. I want to be alone. Writing normally calls for some kind of withdrawal." (Ong 1975:10)

Compare a similar sentiment by Ong in The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook, an anthology designed specifically for composition instructors:

Writing depends on consciously contrived rules.

Moreover, it depends on absences--which amount to the same thing as artificiality. I want to write a book which will be read by hundreds of thousands of people. So, please, everyone leave the room. I have to be alone to communicate. Let us face the utter factitiousness and fictitiousness of such a situation, which can in no way be considered natural or even normal. (Ong 1981:40)

Martin Nystrand agrees, although he does not cite Ong: "Unlike speech, writing is private, solitary activity, whose major purpose is to communicate with someone not immediately present.... Talk involves constant feedback from conversants; writing involves either delayed feedback or, often, no feedback." (1982:83-84)

"If the writer succeeds in writing, it is generally because he can fictionalize in his imagination an audience he has learned to know not from daily life but from earlier writers who were fictionalizing in their imagination audiences they had learned to know in still earlier writers, and so on back to the dawn of written narrative. If and when he becomes truly adept, an 'original writer', he can do more than project the earlier audience, he can alter it" (Ong 1975:11).

"The chief distinction between oral and written speech, when the two are considered from a functional point of view, is the absence, in writing, of a definite situational context. Oral speech normally takes place in an actual situation that provides abundant nonlinguistic clues to the speaker's intended meaning. Written speech, by contrast, must normally secure its meaning in some future time, in varied and unpredictable situations, and for the understanding of a varied and unpredictable audience." (Hirsch 1977:21)

NB: Hirsch cites Ong as a contributor to his notions about implied authors and imaginary audiences. (Hirsch 1977:28 n.17)

"In writing, it is the normal convention for the implied author and audience to be semifictional and rather vague; semifictional because they both must be imaginatively projected rather than directly experienced, and rather vague because their character must be imaginatively available to a broad and heterogeneous audience." (Hirsch 1977:30)

"To sum up, the absence of actual persons, speaking in actual contexts, requires the creation of implied persons speaking in implied contexts. This eccentricity of written speech creates problems which cannot be solved by the ablest native speakers without practice and instruction. That is why one needs to be taught composition in one's own language." (Hirsch 1977:31; original emphasis)

"Turning verbal thought into text is a demanding task. Mina Shaughnessy's work with Basic Writers (1977) has shown that many of their writing errors come from a misapplication of oral speech conventions to writing. Other writers have suggested that although written speech is a specialized and difficult convention to master, it is the language of modern education. In particular, David Olson (1977) and E. D. Hirsch (1977) have recently described the difference between an utterance and a text in terms of our expectations that a text will be fully contextualized. In other words, we expect that the meaning in written speech will be fully contained and explicitly present in the text itself--as it never is in oral speech. By contrast, the meaning of an utterance often depends in large part on a context shared by speaker and listener, on the immediate situation, shared intentions, prior knowledge, and, of course, on many forms of paralinguage--tone, emphasis, and body language. To compensate for all that lost contextual meaning, the writer of a text must draw on the specialized conventions of written discourse in order to contextualize the meaning. A writer is not simply expressing herself or himself but is creating a particular kind of artifact." (Flower and Hayes 1980:39)

SOME TYPES OF SPEECH ACTS

Constatives. Examples, Bach and Harnish 1979:42-43: (1) Assertives: "affirm, allege, assert, aver, avow, claim, declare, maintain, propound, say, state, submit"; (2) Concessives: "acknowledge, admit, agree, allow, assent, concede, concur, confess, grant, own"; (3) Dissentives: "differ, disagree, dissent, reject"; and (4) Suggestives: "conjecture, guess, hypothesize, speculate, suggest." A glance at any published, expository text will confirm that these illocutionary verbs and others like them predominate.

Directives. Examples, Bach and Harnish 1979:47-48: (1) Requirements: "bid, charge, command, demand, dictate, direct, enjoin, instruct, order, prescribe, require"; (2) Permissives: "agree to, allow, authorize, bless, consent to, dismiss, excuse, exempt, forgive, grant, license, pardon, release, sanction"; (3) Advisories: "admonish, advise, caution, counsel, propose, recommend, suggest, urge, warn."

Commissives. Examples, Bach and Harnish 1979:50-51: (1) "Promises: (promise, swear, vow) . . . contract . . . guarantee that . . . guarantee x"; (2) "Offers (offer, propose)."

REFERENCES

- Bach, Kent and Robert M. Harnish. 1979. Linguistic communication and speech acts. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brown, Penelope and Stephen Levinson. 1978. Universals in language use: politeness phenomena. Questions and politeness: strategies in social interaction, ed. by Esther N. Goody, 56-289. Cambridge, Engl.: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Flower, Linda and John R. Hayes. 1980. The dynamics of composing: making plans and juggling constraints. Cognitive processes in writing, ed. Lee W. Gregg and Erwin R. Steinberg. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 31-50.
- Hirsch, Jr., E. D. 1977. The philosophy of composition. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.
- Nystrand, Martin. 1982. The structure of textual space. What writers know: the language, process, and structure of written discourse, ed. Nystrand. New York: Academic Press, 75-86.
- Olson, David R. 1977. From utterance to text: the bias of language in speech and writing. Harvard Educational Review 47:257-81.
- Ong, Walter J. 1975. The writer's audience is always a fiction. PMLA 90:9-21.
- Ong, Walter J. 1981. Literacy and orality in our times. The writing teacher's sourcebook, ed. Gary Tate and Edward P. J. Corbett. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 36-48.
- Shaughnessy, Mina P. 1977. Errors and expectations: a guide for the teacher of basic writing. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.